

REMARKS

Claims 8-15, 20-23, 25-28, 30-32, 35-38 and 42 are currently pending in the present Application. These claims stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,752,805 to Gail, *et al.* ("Gail") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,406,027 to Aksit ("Aksit").

The Applicants have carefully reviewed the pending April 6, 2004 Office Action, and respectfully submit the foregoing amendments and following remarks in response thereto.

The Applicants respectfully traverse the pending § 103(a) rejection based on Gail and Aksit on the grounds that these references, either alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest the present invention as recited in the claims, as amended.

Independent claims 8, 31 and 37 have been amended to add numerical limitations regarding bristle/strand diameter, in order to further clarify the angel hair-like nature of the strands secured by the present invention. This aspect of the present invention is not disclosed or suggested by the cited references, and, as noted by the Examiner in the April 6, 2004 Office Action, was not previously recited in the claims. Claim 8 has been amended to recite that "the strands are composed exclusively of fine, angel hair-like aramid fibers and the bristles formed from the strands have a diameter of less than one-tenth of a millimeter." Similarly, claims 31 and 37 have been amended to recite that "the strand sections are formed exclusively of fine, angel hair aramid fibers having a diameter of less than one-hundredth of a millimeter." In addition, for clarity,

claims 31 and 37 have also been amended to recite “separate fiber strand sections.”

As noted in the Amendment filed December 19, 2003, Aksit discloses use of yarns, each yarn containing 1,000-2,000 bristles, and each bristle on the order of .001 inch (.0254 millimeters) in diameter.

In contrast, the present invention secures its “angel hair-like” separate strands – a feat Aksit itself notes to be “virtually impossible” – into a brush sealing ring, where the individual strands are disclosed as being at least an order of magnitude thinner than Aksit’s bristles. Specification at ¶ [0017] (“between a few hundredths and a few thousandths of millimeters,” *i.e.*, between approximately .000004 and .00004 inches). Thus, claim 8 now recites that “the bristles formed from the strands have a diameter of less than one-tenth of a millimeter,” *i.e.*, less than .004 inches. In other words, the separate bristles of the present invention’s seal are nearly *1000 times smaller* than the separate yarns of Aksit (its 1-2 inch diameter bundles of 1,000-2,000 .001 inch bristles). Thus, no combination of Gail and Aksit teach or suggest the seal ring with fiber strands anywhere near as small as recited in amended claim 8.

Similarly, claims 31 and 37 now recite separate strand sections “having a diameter of less than one-hundredth of a millimeter,” *i.e.*, more than an order of magnitude smaller than anything disclosed or suggested in Gail or Aksit.

Because neither Gail nor Aksit teach or suggest the present invention’s formation of a brush sealing ring with the “angel hair-like” fibers recited in the amended claims, the claims are patentable over these references under § 103(a).

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the pending rejection is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

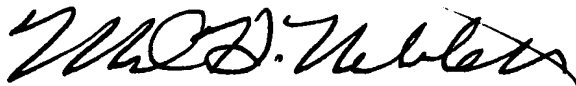
In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the Applicant respectfully submits that claims 8-15, 20-23, 25-28, 30-32, 35-38 and 42 are patentable over the cited references and in condition for allowance. Early and favorable consideration and issuance of a Notice of Allowance for these claims is respectfully requested.

If there are any questions regarding this amendment or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

If necessary to effect a timely response, this paper should be considered as a petition for an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response, and please charge any deficiency in fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 05-1323 (Docket 225MU/50870US).

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Respectfully submitted,



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